

Michigan Department of Community Health Bureau of Laboratories

May 19, 2005

Rubella (German Measles) Outbreak in Ontario, Canada

Call for Cases: Cluster of Legionnaires' Disease Among Travelers to Mexico

Rubella (German Measles) Outbreak in Ontario, Canada

As of May 13, 2005, 177 confirmed cases of rubella have been reported among unimmunized individuals in Oxford, Haldimand-Norfolk and Brant counties in Southwestern Ontario, Canada. The outbreak has been centered in a religious community comprised of many individuals who have not been vaccinated.

Because of the proximity to Michigan, and because there may be interaction and travel between religious community members in Michigan and Ontario, Michigan health care providers should be alert to the possibility of the spread of rubella into Michigan.

Rubella is a mild, viral illness in children but can have serious health consequences for unimmunized pregnant women and their infants. Rubella in an unimmunized pregnant woman may result in birth defects (congenital rubella syndrome) or miscarriage. Symptoms of rubella include a mild rash, low-grade fever and swollen glands in children. Rubella is highly contagious and is spread from person-to-person through droplets from the mouth and nose. Those with rubella are considered infectious seven days before the onset of a rash and seven days after a rash has appeared.

The Michigan Department of Community Health Bureau of Laboratories performs rubella IgM testing on serum from suspect cases. Rubella IgM antibodies are detectable a few days after the onset of rash and peak 7 to 10 days later. Testing is performed with prior approval of the Michigan Department of Community Health, Bureau of Epidemiology. To obtain approval for testing, contact Joel Blostein at 517-335-8159.

Call for Cases: Cluster of Legionnaires' Disease Among Travelers to Mexico

A Pennsylvania resident who traveled to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico in February 2005, was hospitalized with Legionnaires' disease (LD) after returning to the U.S. A California resident who traveled to Puerto Vallarta in April 2005, and stayed in the same hotel developed LD after returning home. In addition, preliminary information indicates two laboratory-confirmed cases of LD have occurred among European travelers to the same hotel. Because of the potential for large numbers of U.S. travelers to be exposed to this hotel, CDC is requesting a heightened level of awareness for cases of LD among travelers to Puerto Vallarta. Diagnostic testing among travelers with community-acquired pneumonia should include collection of urine for antigen testing as well as respiratory specimens for culture of Legionella. For assistance with laboratory testing, contact Dr. Jim Rudrik at 517-335-9641. Local public health officials are asked to report all confirmed or suspect cases of LD among travelers to Mexico to MDCH.

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